

In the Claims

1-8 (canceled).

9. (currently amended) A fastener assembly for use with footwear of the type having opposing circular eyelets, comprising:

a series of fastener elements, each fastener element comprising

a first mating member comprising two curved stop ends, each of the curved stop ends having a distal end and a proximal end, and also comprising one elastomeric member having two ends, the elastomeric member positioned between the proximal ends of the two curved stop ends,

two second mating members comprising a vertical post having a flange located at a bottom portion of the vertical post, a first area of enlarged diameter located at a top of the vertical post and a second area of enlarged diameter located at an intermediate position of the vertical post,

each curved stop end also having

a curved smooth top surface extending from the distal end to the proximal end of the curved stop end so that an entire curved stop end blends together from the distal end to the proximal end, an entire curved smooth top surface available for decoration and no sharp surface appearing anywhere on the curved smooth top surface of the curved stop end,
each curved stop end also containing at its distal end a vertical cavity for receipt of the vertical post, said vertical cavity having annexed thereto spaces for receipt of the first and second areas of enlarged diameter of the

vertical post, each curved stop end also having at its proximal end a hollow lateral cavity to receive in a lockable condition one end of the elastomeric member,

the first and second areas of enlarged diameter shaped so as to make it easy to insert the vertical post into the vertical cavity of the first mating member and difficult to remove said vertical post from the vertical cavity of said first mating member without direct vertical and lateral tugging by a wearer.

10. (previously presented) The fastener assembly of claim 9, wherein the vertical post is substantially cylindrical.

11. (previously presented) The fastener assembly of claim 9, wherein the lateral cavity is substantially cylindrical.

12. (canceled)

13. (previously presented) The fastener assembly of claim 9, wherein the elastomeric member is decorated with a unique color and/or design.

14. (previously presented) The fastener assembly of claim 9, wherein the top surface of the curved stop end of the first mating member is decorated with a unique color and/or design.

15. (withdrawn) A fastener assembly for use with running shoes of the type having pairs of opposing fabric loops on each side of the running shoe, comprising:
a series of fastener elements, each fastener element comprising
a first hook having a free curved distal end for insertion into a first fabric loop of two opposing fabric loops and having a hollow cavity at a proximal end,
a second hook having a free curved distal end for insertion into a second fabric loop of the two opposing fabric loops and having a hollow cavity at a proximal end,
an elongated elastomeric member having a first end detachably connected into the hollow cavity of the first hook and having a second end detachably connected into the hollow cavity of the second hook.

16. (withdrawn) The fastener assembly of claim 15, wherein the elastomeric member is decorated with a unique color and/or design.

17. (previously presented) The fastener assembly of claim 9, wherein the curved smooth top surface at the distal end is concave and wherein a remainder of the curved top surface gradually declines in slope to the proximal end.